



ONE of the country's largest media education centres will be established at Whitireia Community Polytechnic's campus in Wellington's Cuba Mall.

The Whitireia journalism and publishing schools will be joined at the Wellington city campus by the recently acquired NZ Radio Training School and the polytech's creative writing school to become the Whitireia NZ Media Training Centre early next year.



The proposal was approved by the polytech council at a special meeting on Friday.

CEO Don Campbell (**left**) says this innovative development "really embodies our vision as a polytechnic to 'lead and illuminate'.

"It is ideally located in the heart of Wellington and brings together outstanding programmes and staff for the benefit of industry and our communities."

Whitireia Dean of Arts Kaye Jujnovich says she is delighted about the plans. Although she would not disclose how much the makeover would cost, she says it will be money well spent.

The new centre will fill the entire first floor of the former Wellington Workingmen's Club near the Bucket Fountain, premises Whitireia rebuilt in 2008.

Recording studios, production suites and other media-related facilities will now be added.

The [NiuFM radio station](#) is also looking at relocating to the campus, providing an outlet for practical radio work done by journalism students.



Operated by the Pacific Media Network (along with 531PI), the station broadcasts nationally and the network wants to boost its presence in the Wellington region.

It will work with HollaFM, a Porirua-based Pasifika station that was recently taken over by Whitireia.

As part of the development, Whitireia Journalism School will launch a third new programme at the campus, the [Diploma in Radio Journalism](#), the only course of its kind in New Zealand.



It joins the new Certificate in Multimedia Journalism launched earlier this year and the National Diploma in Journalism (Multimedia), which was relocated from the Porirua campus in 2008 and completely revamped and expanded.

With more than 70 journalism students coming through the doors each year, Whitireia will match Auckland University of Technology as the country's biggest journalism education institution.

The [Diploma in Publishing](#) is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and half of those who graduated from the programme last Friday were offered jobs by publishers around the country before they finished their training.

The publishing programme, too, will be expanding in 2011, offering for the first time a Book Editing Masterclass and an annual Te Reo Maori Scholarship.

“We have also boosted our training in e-books and digital publishing,” says programme leader Rachel Lawson (**right**). “[It’s] a new focus that fits well with the environment in the new media school.”

Whitireia Journalism School head Jim Tucker says the polytech council’s decision to approve the new centre will see fruition for plans originally laid in 2007.



“So many things have changed in the news media over the past couple of years, and this centre will see us fully equipped to train the multimedia journalists of the future,” he says. The centre will have multimedia – web, print, radio and video – facilities to enable students to emerge ready to face any news media-related job.

Whitireia’s journalism students numbered in single figures in 2007 and courses faced closure. The rebuild of the last three years will see the school in a strong position among the country’s 10 tertiary journalism institutions, with the highest student throughput.

“Our recent research shows we have redeveloped a good reputation with the media industry and our graduates are having little trouble finding jobs,” says Tucker (**right**).

The school is the only one to have its own news website, NewsWire.co.nz, which publishes students’ work and ensures they are fully conversant with web-related media developments.

Growth has ensured the school can employ a full range of specialist tutors to cover the technological developments that have changed the media landscape dramatically in the last decade.

The new radio diploma, which will start on April 4, 2011, will initially take 15 students, who will spend a semester at the school before going out to the radio industry to work in newsrooms.

Next year, the school plans to develop a range of short courses in media photography, video reporting for the web, blogging and web editing. It will also have level 3 NCEA-relevant “boot camp” courses for senior secondary students interested in exploring journalism as a career.

The Whitireia creative writing school offers [three diplomas](#) and an undergraduate degree, while the [NZ Radio Training School](#) currently delivers certificates in radio production from its premises in upper Cuba St and in Auckland.

Work on the building will begin shortly and students will be able to use the facilities from early next year.

